

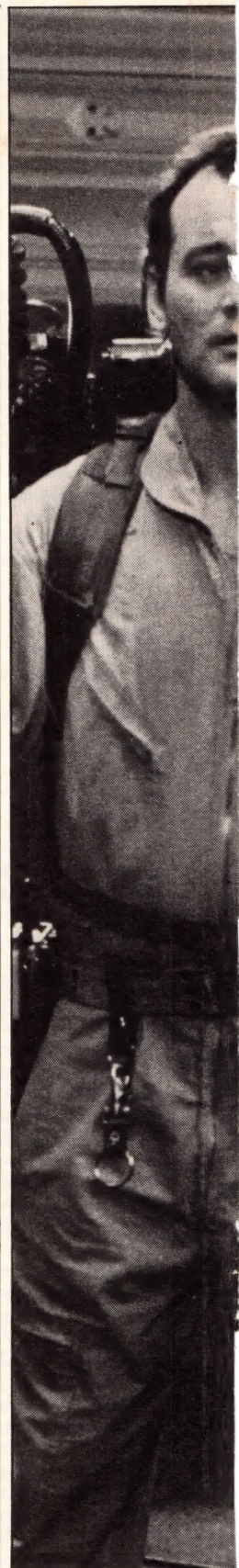
The film Ghostbusters is set in present day New York City. Where a whacky trio of astute but slightly daft parapsychologists set up their own business after they are evicted from the university. These cosmic crusaders make their financial ends meet by removing New York's unwanted spectres.

Ghostbusters is directed and produced by Ivan Reitman, written by Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis, director of photography is Laszlo Kovacs ASC. Ghostbusters is a Columbia release.

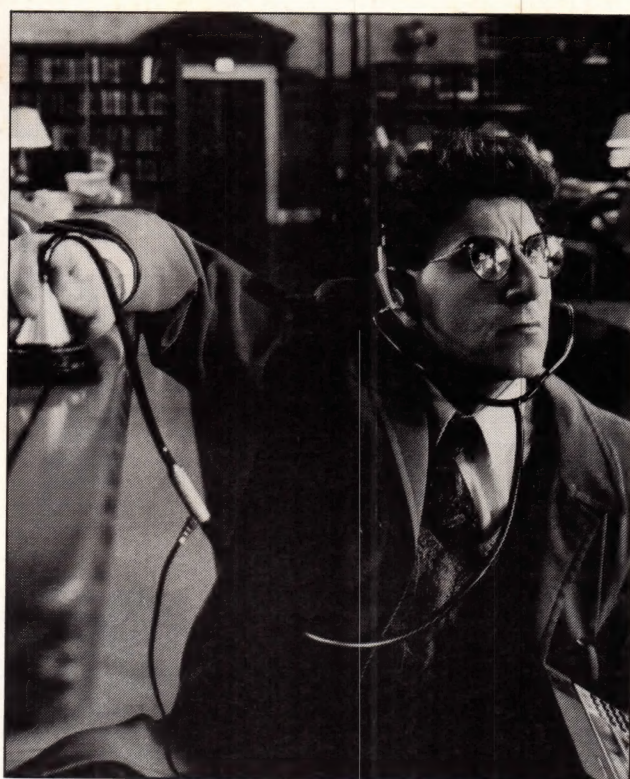
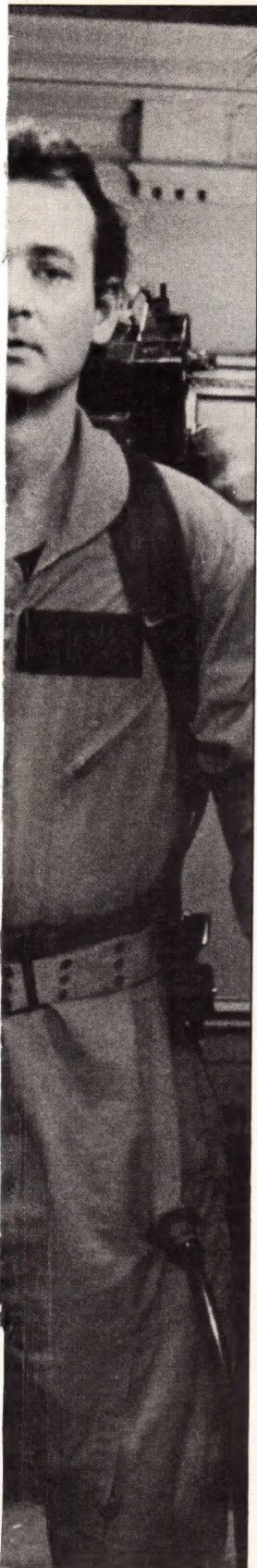
GH⁰STE



Top: Stanz (Dan Aykroyd) talks to an upset hotel manager, assuring him that the Ghostbusters will capture the 'greedy' ghost that has been consuming all the food in the hotel banqueting hall and upsetting the guests. Above: The ghostbusters team smarten up their image, posing for a press shot, at the door of a disused fire station, their new office.



BUSTERS



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Left: Venkman (Bill Murray), centre, suggests that his partners Stanz (Dan Ackroyd), and Spengler (Harold Ramis) exercise a little caution in the haunted hotel as they approach the 'greedy' ghost. Top: One of the Ghostbusters Spengler (Harold Ramis) tries to detect a ghost haunting the city's public library. Above: Venkman (Bill Murray), Stanz (Dan Aykroyd) and Spengler (Harold Ramis), apprehensively await a siting of the New York City library's rather disagreeable ghost.



Top: Dr. Peter Venkman (Bill Murray) tries to chat up one of his students by convincing her of the great fictitious psychic powers that she possesses.
Above: Slavita Jovan plays Gozer the vapour villain who has taken human form when he is confronted by the ghostbusters.

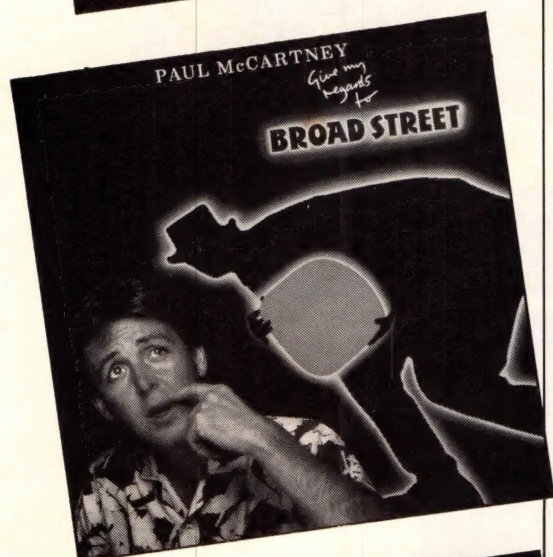
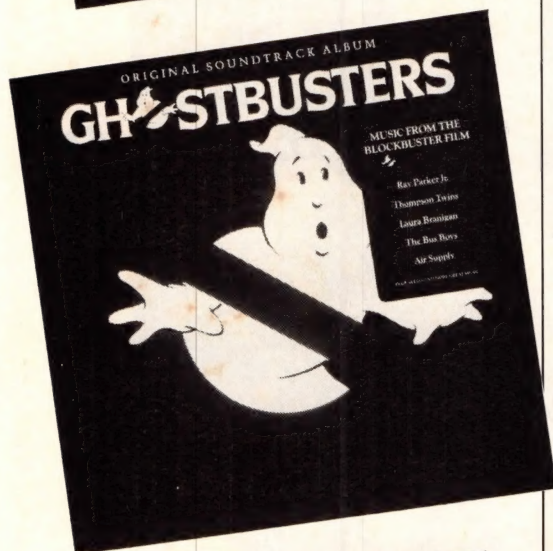
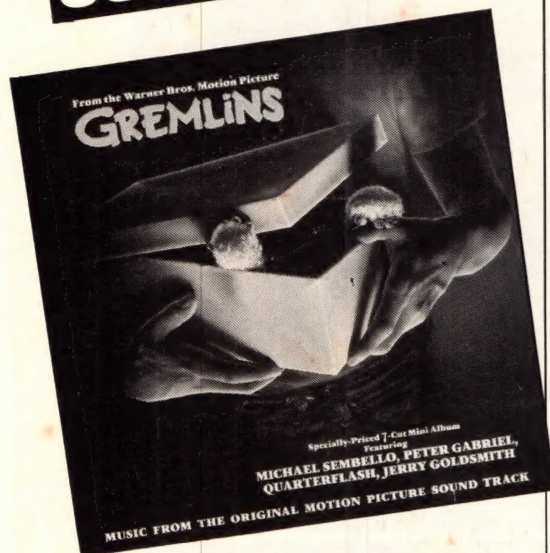




Left: Gozer (Slavita Jovan) the chief ghost tries to take over New York City and the ghostbusters prepare for a battle.
 Top: Sigourney Weaver plays Dana Barrett, a cellist who has a supernatural problem and the ghostbusters are the only ones who can help.
 Above: The triumphant trio return a little soiled after the capture of one of their victimised ghosts.

films SOUNDTRACKS

by David Stoner



The writing of music for films is an exact and skillful craft. If it is done well, it is often not noticed in the film but if it is done badly it can produce horrendous results. Two of the biggest films around at Christmas are *Ghostbusters* and *Gremlins* and both provide excellent examples of good and bad use of popular music as film music.

There is a growing and disturbing trend amongst producers to use rock music somewhere in a film so that an extra marketable product in the form of an album, can be used to promote the film. With *Gremlins*, this policy has not worked in anybody's favour.

The film, a black comedy from Joe Dante, is served better by Jerry Goldsmith's subtle scoring than by the handful of songs with which it is lumbered. These are given prominence on the album but serve no useful purpose in the film and, as such, are dead weight. Three songs are heard on side one of the album and not only are they eminently forgettable but it is a mental struggle to remember where they occur in the film. Side two offers greater pleasures with a Goldsmith score which supports this unwieldy film in more ways than it deserves. At the time of writing there is no UK release of this album and it is only available as an American import on Warner Records. With the score proper, for much of the time, Goldsmith is content to play a low-key and understated role and the early scenes showing Hoyt Axton's first encounter with Gizmo, the gremlin, and Billy's musical harmonizing with it are treated with care and sensitivity. Dante's picture of small town life and its inhabitants, in particular the repellent Mrs Deagle, are scored with much humour but, again, understated so as not to tip the film too far in to the realms of farce. Finally, there is a gorgeous Machiavellian glee running through 'The Gremlin Rag' which closes the album and film. A spritely tune that stays in the memory longer than any of the songs.

The songs in *Ghostbusters*, however, are a complete success and the film greatly benefits from their presence. Ray Parker Jr's title song so perfectly picks up on and reflects the antics of Messrs Aykroyd, Murray and Ramis with various spooks that one automatically turns to the album to repeat the experience. It's no wonder that the album has achieved the success it has.

Besides the songs, we are also treated to a neat score by Elmer Bernstein, two pieces of which are on the album. Bernstein's association with this film can be traced back along the Reitman/Landis line from *National Lampoon's Animal House* through *Stripes*, *Meatballs* and *American Werewolf In London* and on to *The Blues Brothers* and *Trading Places*. In all of these, his role has tended to be of a back-seat nature and more in a supervisory capacity. However, despite the predominance and importance of songs in these films, Bernstein's own contributions should not be underrated. This is particularly true of *Ghostbusters* with the perky main title theme orchestrated and presented in such a way so as to place the proceedings firmly in a humorous position but reminding the listener that we are entering a world of unpleasant and malevolent spirits. The album, on Arista 206559, is entertaining in its own right as well as being an excellent souvenir from a hugely enjoyable film experience.

Utilising, to good or indifferent effect, pop songs is one thing, but asking people from the world of popular music to score a film is quite another. Sometimes it can prove very successful, not to say lucrative, as in the case of *Chariots Of Fire* and *Local Hero*, and on some occasions it can be truly awful as with Jimmy Page's lame attempts on the equally

awful *Death Wish 2*.

Two recent scores exhibit both sides of the coin. The inferior of the two is *The Hit* (Mercury 822 668-1). The idea of getting flamenco guitarist Paco DeLucia to score Stephen Frear's violent enigma is an interesting one but perhaps the best solution would have been to have him perform the score rather than compose it as well. The music seldom works in the film and is often too obtrusive for its own good, occasionally working against the mood of a scene. The point of having Eric Clapton scoring the early London scenes and DeLucia the Spanish ones is lost with the album since none of Clapton's music is present, presumably for contractual reasons. The contrast in writing and playing styles was an interesting one and it is a pity that it is not repeated. The album is difficult to get into with most of the cues being too short or just so fragmentary in nature that one is inclined not to bother. The overall harshness of tone doesn't help matters.

A more successful score comes from the comparative veteran Mark Knopfler. With the two Bill Forsyth movies under his belt, I was interested to hear how the change of pace of *Cal* would inspire him. The result is a sensitive score with the writer using the locale of the story as an influence on the choice of instrumentation. Not an obvious Irish sound but one is made aware that Ireland is at the heart of the music. Using a theme that resembles 'Amazing Grace' in melody, Knopfler has fashioned a score that may not become as popular as *Local Hero* but is certainly superior to it and the album (Vertigo VERH 17) contains several tracks memorable for their haunting quality.

The promise that Randy Newman showed with his period score to Milos Forman's *Ragtime* didn't really prepare one for the excellence of *The Natural* (WEA 9251161). Although highly derivative of Aaron Copland, the music has an undeniable appeal and is full of the bucolic charm found in Copland's more approachable works. The score is perfectly suited to Barry Levinson's warm depiction of 30's America and so, although open to criticisms of plagiarism, Newman's choice in adopting that particular approach makes sense.

Another agreeable album is *Give My Regards to Broad Street* (EMI PCTC2) Paul McCartney's return to films presents him as a pop star to whom the worst happens — the master tapes for his latest album are stolen. The soundtrack is a collection of re-recorded McCartney songs which range from Beatles hits such as 'Yesterday' and 'Eleanor Rigby' to more recent successes. New material is limited and the best of this is the ballad 'No More Lonely Nights'. Arguably, the original versions of these songs are the best and the paucity of new songs are possible reasons for adverse criticism but within the context of the film, the use of familiar songs is easier on the ear and gives an immediate identification with the central character as a successful songwriter.

The Canadian composer Ken Wannberg has done a fair amount of work as a music editor particularly on films scored by John Williams. It is perhaps not too surprising to discover that his score for *The Philadelphia Experiment* bears more than a passing resemblance to a Williams adventure epic. The music, though exciting in parts, is somewhat downbeat in character and becomes mechanical after a while — an exercise in scoring suspense with little feel for an overall presentation. An album is available from America on Rhino RNSP 306. It is possible that Wannberg will follow in the path of James Horner, become involved with bigger and better films and so, like Horner's early *Battle Beyond The Stars*, it is worth noting the score and watching for future developments.